

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

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PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3000/3001/3002

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY ROME
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USCINCEUR
CINCLANT
CINCUSNAVEUR

UNCLAS STATE 050728

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR/XO/US/UK

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA PRESS GUIDANCE

1. DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS, IN TESTIFYING
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE YESTERDAY (3-12),
WITH ADM. MOORER PRESENT, INITIALLY RESPONDED TO A QUESTION
BY AGREEING THAT THE INTENDED EXPANDED 12,000
FOOT RUNWAY ON DIEGO GARCIA COULD ACCOMMODATE B-52 BOMBERS
IN ADDITION TO TANKER AND CARGO AIRCRAFT. CLEMENTS ALSO
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SAID THE TOTAL COST OF THE DIEGO FACILITY WOULD BE \$75
MILLION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. BOTH OF THESE STATEMENTS
CONTRADICT THE PRIOR TESTIMONY OF ACDA AND STATE BEFORE THE
HAMILTON HFAC SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA.
ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL USE THE FOLLOWING LINE IN RESPONSE TO
QUERIES.

A. B-52'S - -MR. WEISS, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF POLITICO-
MILITARY AFFAIRS, TESTIFIED BEFORE THE HFAC SUBCOMMITTEE
ON MARCH 6, AND IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM REPRESENTA-
TIVE HAMILTON, THE CHAIRMAN, SAID A B-52 COULD NOT LAND ON
THE EXPANDED RUNWAY. MR. WEISS ADDED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDER-
STANDING THAT THE RUNWAY WAS "SIMPLY NOT STRONG ENOUGH; IT

IS NOT REINFORCED ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A B-52." MR. WEISS' STATEMENT WAS BASED UPON AN EXPLICIT UNDERSTANDING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE THAT THE EXPANDED FACILITIES AT DIEGO GARCIA COULD NOT ACCOMMODATE B-52 AIRCRAFT.

B. COST OF FACILITY - "IN OUR TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CONGRESS AND IN SEPARATE BRIEFING INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE, WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT THE EXPANSION PLANS AT DIEGO GARCIA ARE LIMITED TO THE \$29 MILLION REQUESTED IN THE FY 74 DOD READINESS SUPPLEMENTAL, TO BE COMPLEMENTED BY \$3.3 MILLION IN THE FY 75 DEFENSE BUDGET. ON THE BASIS OF OUR CLEAR UNDERSTANDING FROM THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, THESE FIGURES REFLECTED THE EXTENT OF CURRENT ADMINISTRATION PLANS ON DIEGO GARCIA.,

2. AMPLIFYING QUESTIONS ARE BEING REFERRED TO DEFENSE. WE WILL BE PROVIDING THE TEXT OF DEFENSE'S GUIDANCE SEPARATELY.

3. FYI. EXCERPTS OF RELATED ARTICLES APPEARING IN LOCAL PAPERS ARE PROVIDED. QUOTE.

WASHINGTON STAR-NEWS, MARCH 12, GEORGE SHERMAN. DEPUTY DEFENSE SECRETARY WILLIAM P. CLEMENS, JR. AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, THOMAS H. MOORER, TODAY AGREED THAT THE PLANNED AMERICAN BASE ON THE ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE UNCLASSIFIED

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GIANT B52 BOMBERS.

AT A MEETING OF THE SENATE FOREIGN ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE THIS MORNING BOTH AGREED WITH A QUESTION FROM ACTING CHAIRMAN SEN. STUART SYMINGTON, D-MO., THAT THE PROPOSED 12,000-FOOT RUNWAY COULD ACCOMMODATE "AIRCRAFT TANKERS, B52 BOMBERS, AND OTHER HEAVY CARGO AIRCRAFT."

BUT LATER MOORER TOLD REPORTERS HE HAD NO UNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION. HE SAID THAT NO PLANS EXIST TO ACTUALLY PUT B52S ON DIEGO GARCIA, AND HE DID NOT THINK, HE SAID, THAT THE RUNWAY WOULD BE "PROPERLY CONSTRUCTED FOR CONTINUOUS USE" OF THE GIANT BOMBERS IN THE HOT WEATHER OF THE INDIAN OCEAN.

MOORER ALSO SAID THAT, IN ANY CASE, NO MORE THAN "TWO OR THREE" OF THE STRATEGIC BOMBERS COULD BE ACCOMMODATED ON THE TINY ATOLL.

MOORER AND CLEMENTS WERE TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF A \$29 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO BEGIN THE MODERNIZATION OF THE BRITISH NAVAL AND AIR FACILITIES ON DIEGO

GARCIA. BOTH INSISTED THAT THE RESULT WOULD NOT BE A "MAJOR BASE," BUT RATHER AN "OPERATING FACILITY" TO SUPPORT

INTERMITTENT, AMERICAN NAVAL FORCES SAILING FROM THE PACIFIC INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE TOTAL COST OF THE FACILITY WAS SET BY CLEMENTS AS \$75 MILLION, OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. UNQUOTE.

THE WASHINGTON POST, MARCH 13, 1974, MICHAEL GETLER. QUOTE. A SENATE HEARING YESTERDAY ON A CONTROVERSIAL PLAN TO EXPAND U.S. AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITIES ON THE TINY INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND OF DIEGO GARCIA PRODUCED AN APPARENT MISSTATEMENT BY TOP PENTAGON OFFICIALS CONCERNING POSSIBLE USE OF THE BASE BY B-52 BOMBERS.

THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ALSO PRODUCED AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE PENTAGON THAT EXPANSION AND DEEPENING OF THE HARBOR ON THE BRITISH-OWNED ISLAND WOULD ALLOW AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER TO SQUEEZE INTO THE PROPOSED FACILITY, UNCLASSIFIED

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THOUGH SUCH USE WOULD NOT BE A "NORMAL PROCEDURE."

THE CONFUSION OVER THE B-52S--WHICH CAUSED SOME ANXIOUS TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE PENTAGON--AROSE DURING QUESTIONING OF DEPUTY DEFENSE SECRETARY WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF ADM. THOMAS H. MOORER.

SEN. STUART SYMINGTON (D-MO.) SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE ISLAND'S 8,000-FOOT RUNWAY TO 12,000 FEET WAS "IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE AIRCRAFT TANKERS, B-52 BOMBERS AND OTHER HEAVY CARGO AIRCRAFT. IS THAT CORRECT, HE ASKED.

"YES, SIR," REPLIED CLEMENTS, WITH MOORER ALSO INDICATING AGREEMENT.

WHEN PRESSED ON THIS LATER BY NEWSMEN, MOORER SAID HE HAD MISUNDERSTOOD THE QUESTION AND THAT ,WE ARE NOT PLANNING TO OPERATE OR STATION B-52'S ON THIS LIMITED-SUPPORT FACILITY.,

MOORER SAID THE EXTENDED RUNWAY WOULD STILL NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH OR WIDE ENOUGH (THE B-52S HAVE WHEELS ON THE TIPS OF THEIR LONG WINGS) "TO HANDLE CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS OF LOADED B-52'S."

UNDER QUESTIONING BY SYMINGTON, HOWEVER, MOORER INDICATED HE WOULD NOT HAVE OPPOSED MAKING THE RUNWAY STRONGER AND WIDER, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE APPARENTLY HAD BEEN A PROPOSAL TO THAT EFFECT.

OTHER INFORMANTS SAY THE AIR FORCE ORIGINALLY DID PROPOSE SUCH A RUNWAY ON THE THEORY THAT THE FACILITY SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE ALL TYPES OF U.S. PLANES. THIS POSITION WAS EVENTUALLY CHANGED, THESE SOURCES REPORT, THOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHO REJECTED THE PLAN. UNQUOTE.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MARCH 13, 1974, JOHN W. FINNEY. QUOTE. DEFENSE OFFICIALS, FACING QUESTIONING ABOUT THE DIEGO GARCIA NAVAL BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN LEFT IT UNCLEAR TODAY UNCLASSIFIED

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WHETHER THE UNITED STATES WISHED TO USE THE FACILITY FOR B-52 STRATEGIC BOMBERS OR COULD DO SO.

OUT OF THE CONFLICTING STATEMENTS OF HIGH-RANKING DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, CAME THE DISCLOSURE THAT UNDER PENTAGON CONSTRUCTION PLANS THE NAVAL BASE ON THE SMALL BRITISH-HELD ISLAND WOULD BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, AS WELL AS THE KC-135 TANKER PLANES THAT ARE USED TO REFUEL B-52'S.

SENATOR SYMINGTON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ADDITIONAL FUNDS WOULD BE REQUESTED BY THE AIR FORCE IN THE NEXT BUDGET TO HELP DEFRAY THE COST OF EXTENDING THE 8,000-FOOT RUNWAY TO 12,000 FEET AND OF BUILDING PARKING APRONS AND FUEL STORAGE FACILITIES SO THAT THE AIRFIELD COULD ACCOMMODATE B-52 BOMBERS, TANKER PLANES AND LARGE CARGO AIRCRAFT. THE TWO PENTAGON OFFICIALS REPLIED, ALMOST IN UNISON, "THAT IS CORRECT."

BUT, AT AN AFTERNOON SESSION, ADMIRAL MOORER AMENDED HIS COMMENTS TO THE POINT OF RETRACTING HIS EARLIER ANSWER.

HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT CAUGHT THE REFERENCE TO THE B-52 BOMBERS IN SENATOR SYMINGTON'S QUESTION. HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT THE RUNWAY WOULD NOT BE SUITABLE FOR "CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS" OF B-52'S AND ASSERTED THAT "WE ARE NOT PLANNING TO OPERATE OR STATION B-52'S IN THIS LIMITED SUPPORT FACILITY.,

AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, ADMIRAL MOORER INDICATED THAT CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN WITHIN THE PENTAGON TO EXPANDING THE DIEGO GARCIA BASE SO THAT IT COULD ACCOMMODATE B-52'S AND THAT ON STRATEGIC GROUNDS HE WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A MOVE.

SENATOR SYMINGTON OBSERVED THAT HE HAD A SECRET STATEMENT FROM THE PENTAGON THAT "DOESN'T SEEM TO JIBE WITH YOUR STATEMENT" THAT B-52'S WOULD NOT OPERATE FROM DIEGO GARCIA. "I THINK THAT WAS A PROPOSAL," ADMIRAL MOORER RESPONDED,

SUGGESTING THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL HAD BEEN CONSIDERED AND
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REJECTED.

THE COMMENTS OF MR. CLEMENTS AND ADMIRAL MOORER CAUSED
SOME CONSTERNATION AMONG STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, WHO
HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO REASSURE NATIONS IN THE REGION THAT
EXPANSION OF THE ISLAND BASE DID NOT REPRESENT A MAJOR
STRATEGIC MOVE BY THE UNITED STATES INTO THE INDIAN
OCEAN.

AT STATE DEPARTMENT URGING, THEREFORE, THE DEFENSE DEPART-
MENT TODAY ISSUED A "CLARIFYING STATEMENT" EMPHASIZING
THAT THE PENTAGON PLAN "IS FOR A SUPPORT FACILITY AND NOT
A B-52 BOMBER BASE." A PENTAGON OFFICIAL ADDED THAT THE
AIRSTRIPE "WAS NOT BEING DESIGNED FOR EVEN CASUAL USE BY
B-52'S." UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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30 JUN 2005

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To: ABU DHABI
ADDIS ABABA
BANGKOK
COLOMBO
BLANTYRE
CAIRO

CANBERRA
CAPE TOWN
DACCA
DAR ES SALAAM
ISLAMABAD
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